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ABSTRACT

The writings included in this student-produced publication are those of students in the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union's (ILGWU's) Worker-Family Education Program technical and English-as-a-Second-Language classes at a Bronx (New York) local unit. The collection of writings consists of personal narratives, interviews, dialogues, expressions of opinion, drawings, and photographs, primarily related to sewing skills and experiences, job training, and aspirations. Many are accounts of immigrants adjusting to life in a new country. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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MAKING A LIVING:

WHAT WE DID,

WHAT WE DO,

WHAT WE WANT TO DO

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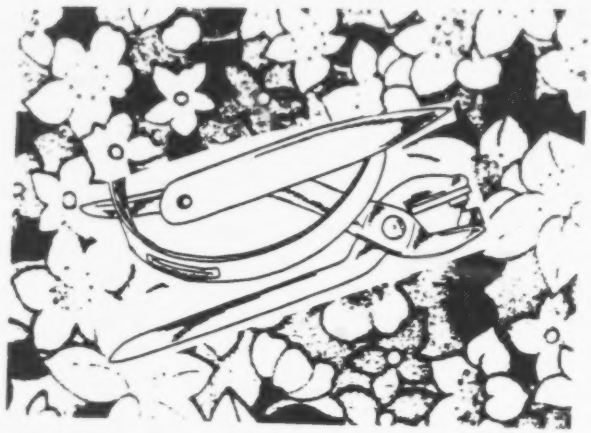

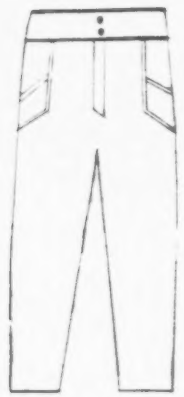

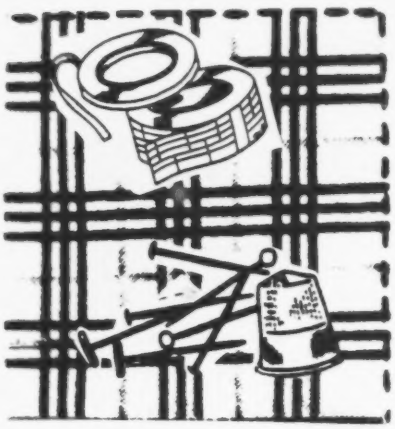

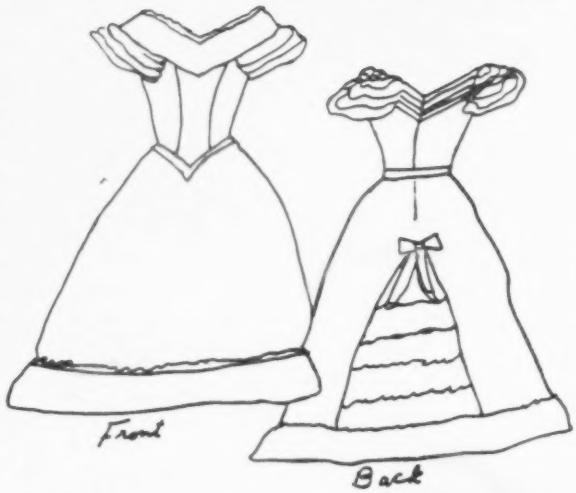

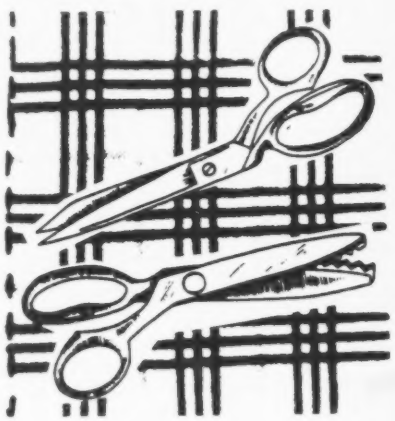

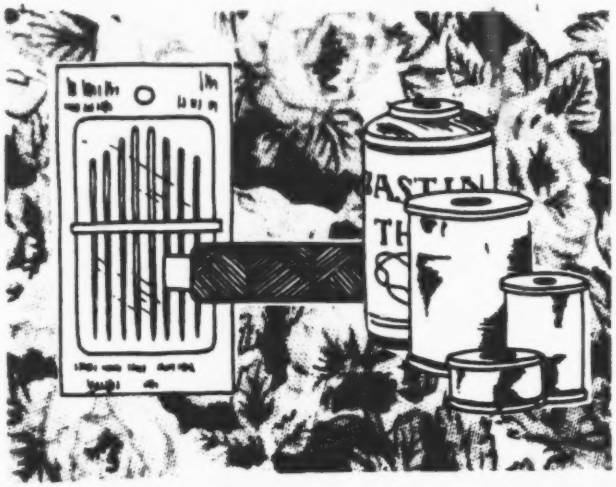

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A FEW WORDS ABOUT THIS MAGAZINE

The writings in this magazine are from students in The Worker-Family Education Program's Technical/English classes at the High School of Fashion Industries and the English as a Second Language class at Exquisite Form, a union shop (Local 62-32), in the Bronx.

The program wishes to thank the New York State Department of Education for their continued funding and the High School of Fashion Industries for the use of their facilities.

Photographs in this magazine are courtesy of Cara Metz.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

My First Garment Was a Dress For Myself..... 1 - 20

Do You Want to Learn Something New and Interesting?.....21 - 31

We Always Help Each Other When We Need It.....32 - 44

I Want to Tell You What I Do For a Living.....45 - 60

My Wish, My Dream.....61 - 68

My Snack Placemat

Name of Dad or Dad-like Figure

My First Garment Was a Dress for Myself

My older sister is a tailor. She made clothes for particular people. She had many customers. Sometimes I helped her and I liked that.

One day I told her I would like to make a dress for myself. She answered, "Of course you could make a dress." She made me happy. I bought 2 yards of material. I remember the design was blue and white. It was beautiful.

My sister took my measurements for me. Then I tried to do the dress, but I did not make the pattern first because I did not know how to do it, so I traced on the material. First, I traced all the blouse 2 darts on the front from the waist line to the apex point. On the back in the waist line I made a little shirring. Around the neck I made a collar on the front. I put buttons and short sleeves with shirring. I was cutting all of them, then I traced the skirt with a little shirring on the waist line open on the front with buttons. I made a belt for the waist line.

I took about one week to finish and I felt very happy when I was wearing my dress.

Rebeca Cuesta

I came from The People's Republic of China, Canton. I was born in Canton. My city is beautiful but I came to America to make a better living. I have to learn American English and work very hard.

I love New York City. Now I live in Brooklyn,, I work in Manhattan. Everyday I take subway to go to work. I am a Sample Maker. I like my job, I sew skirts, blouses, dresses, sometimes jackets and pants. After work on Wednesdays and Fridays I go to the union English class. On Tuesdays and Thursdays I learn Draping.

I sewed my first shirt when I was seventeen years old in China. My mother taught me how to sew. It was a cotton and shirt with flowers on it, It had many colors, white, green, purple and brown. It was a very simple style shirt. I finished the shirt with difficulties, but It looked beautiful and it fit me.

by Zheng Lu

My first day of sewing I was scared of working with machines, but my sister-in-law taught me and I got used to it. Now that I've learned, I like sewing.

My first piece was a blouse. I made it with hard work. My brother watched me work and he said, "It is nice," and he said, "Make a dress." I wanted to finish the blouse first. The color of the blouse was white with short sleeves. It looked beautiful.

Beatriz

A NATIVE SCENERY BLOUSE

One holiday,when I was nine years old, my parents were making plans for Christmas when it was near.

I sat by myself thinking what I would like for my Christmas. Suddenly a thought came to me: my mother and father made a lot of plans for our home, so when they were finished I went to them and told them that I would like to go in the country to spend my Christmas with my Godmother. Suddenly there was silence. My mother, father , sisters and brothers all looked at each other for a moment. Then my mother replied "That's a good idea." One of my sisters said no, but one brother said yes, and my father said yes also. I felt happy all over because my father said yes.

Two weeks before Christmas my mother took me to spend my holidays in the country with my Godmother. During my stay I watched my Godmother sew. She was a dressmaker. One day while I sat beside her watching her sew this thought came to me; if I ask my Godmother to sew a white blouse for me would she do it? Then I told her what I was thinking. She asked me why I wanted a white blouse, and could't she make something different. I replied no; then I asked her, "Goddy have you ever seen a native scenery embroidered blouse?" She replied, "Yes." I said "That's why I want the white blouse Goddy to draw the natives and embroider them. Goddy told me I would have to stay with her a longer time. Immediately, I agreed. I was overjoyed.

After my blouse was completed, my Godmother commended me. I went home. During the years that followed, I cherished and cared for my blouse so well that one day,after my sixteenth birthday, my mother asked me what would I like to be. I replied, "A dressmaker mommie, but first I would like to work in an embroidery establishment." Mommie said, "That's a good idea; you could take your white empbroidened blouse with you when you're going as a sample of what you can do."So my mother took me and I took my blouse as she suggested.

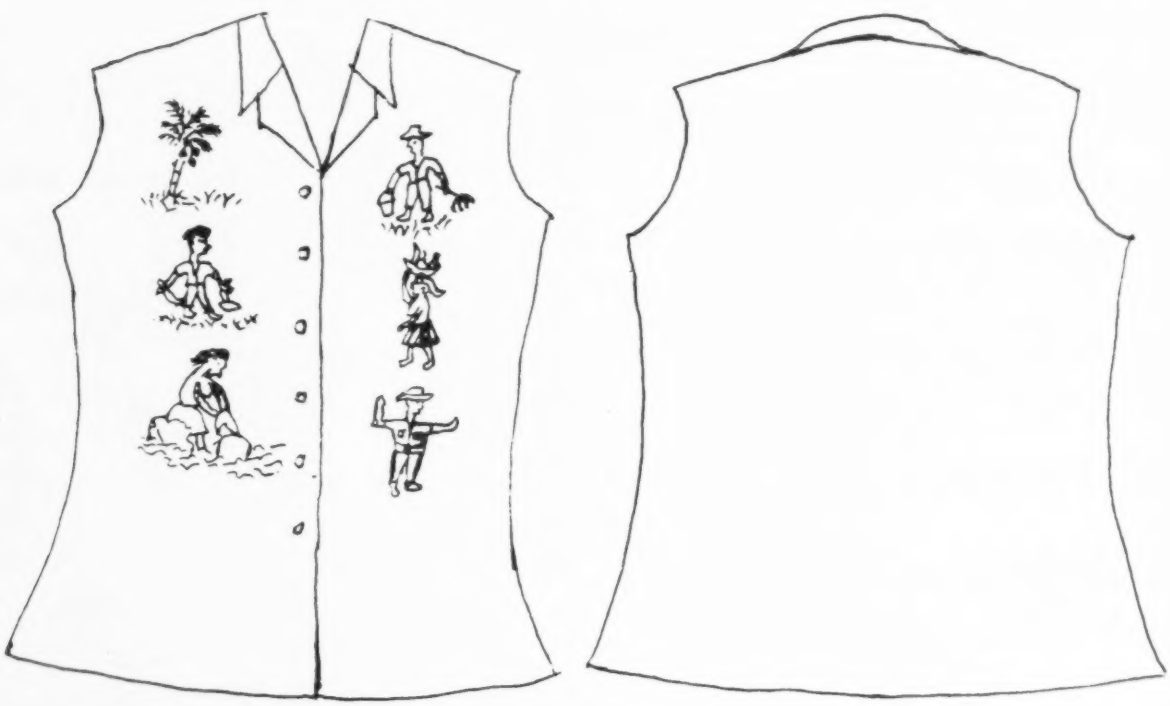
The morning when we both went to the embroidery department to inquire about the job the first question the lady asked my mother was "Do you have a sample to show us what she can do?" My mother replied, "Yes". So I gave the blouse to her which she looked at and replied, "This is pretty and neat; we'll take her." I was overjoyed. I kept that job for one and a half years. Then I left and went to work as a dressmaker in a garment factory, and have been doing dressmaking until now.

by Ferris M. Blake

Jamaica West Indies
Native Scenery Blouse

The Native Scenes on the blouse are embroidered with coloured silk threads.

White



Front

Back

Ferris M. Blake.

MY FIRST DRESS

by Marie Julie Joseph

When I was a little girl, 12 years old, I always helped my mother to sew. She showed me how to do the hem, how to sew the buttons, and how to stitch by hand.

While she was sick, she stayed in the hospital for one month, and my older sister stayed with her. I stayed home with my brother, who came after me, and my two little sisters.

That time it was the end of vacation, and we had to wear our uniforms to go back to school. My mother had material at home and I made our uniforms. I also had some blue cotton polyester material that I used to make my first dress. It was cut at the waist, with a jewel neck, puff sleeves with ruffles, and red southache (braid) and a gathered skirt with ruffles and soutache. It was very nice.

When my mother came back from the hospital, and she saw the dress, she was very happy. She told me with a sweet voice, "Julie, please take the red soutache off the dress, because I am going to die." I did not understand well what she said but I told her. "When you die, then I will take it off."

Thanks to God, she lived to see me make so many dresses, and I made my three sisters' wedding dresses. She died 16 years later.

I am very happy because my mother taught me how to sew, and now I like to sew very good, and very fast. So when I make a dress, it looks finished and professional.

10

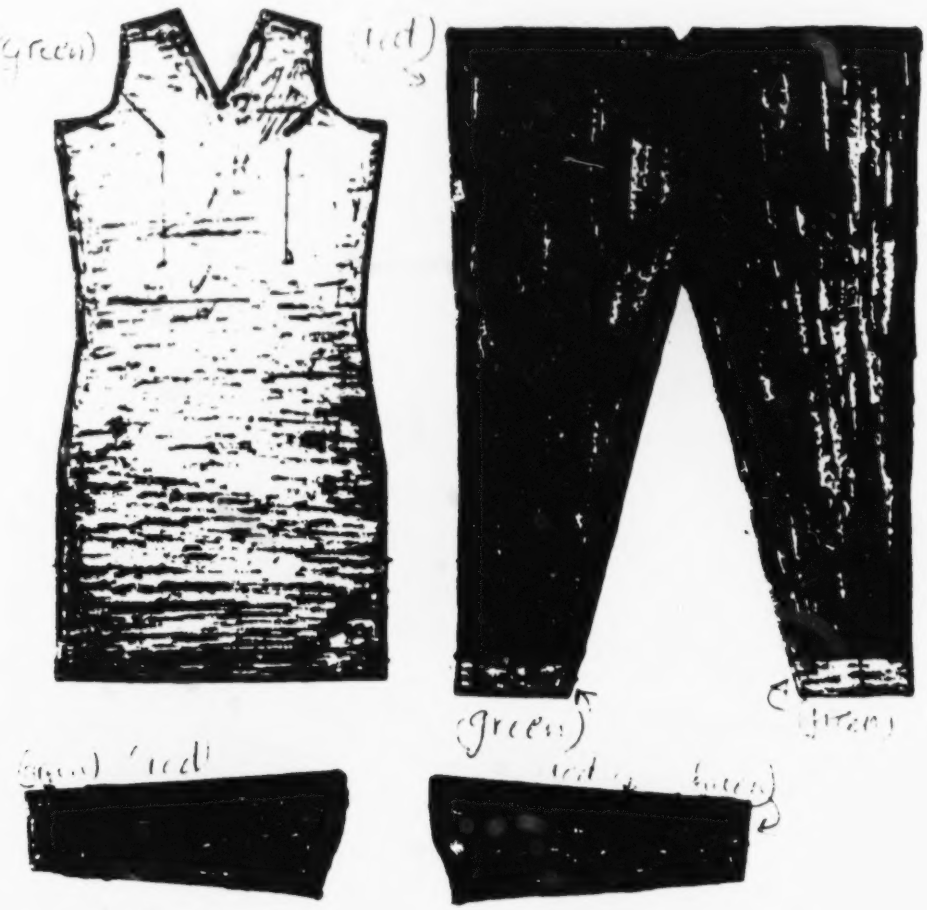
MY FIRST GARMENT

by Jaswinder Kaur

My name is Jaswinder. I am very interested in sewing. I like to make dresses, shirts and baby clothes. I didn't learn sewing from school; I learned by myself. My mother and sister used to sew in the house, and I learned from both of them.

When I started, I made mistakes, and my mother told me about them. Slowly, slowly I started to make a lot of dresses for everybody. First, for my mother, and then for my sister. She made dresses for me before I learned how to sew. She was so surprised because at that time I was only 15 years old. Now I make many dresses for myself. I hope to now get more experience in class. Then I will be able to make very nice dresses.

This is a sketch of a green and maroon silk salwar (pants) and kmeeze (dress) that I made about three weeks ago. Since I came here, two or three years ago, I have made about 20 or 30 suits like this for myself. When I left India, I gave my clothes to my sister and sister-in-law. That is why I made a new wardrobe for myself here.



I remembered when my grandmother was sitting at her sewing machine. She was a dressmaker. I was 9 years old. I asked her, "Please grandmother, tell me how to make a dress." But she kept telling me, "Next time, not today," and that was her answer all the time.

One day, I asked my father to give me some money and I bought a piece of fabric so, I started to make a dress. I cut around the collar and the arm hole and I sewed. After all that, it was okay. It was a mini-dress. I think it was very pretty for my first time.

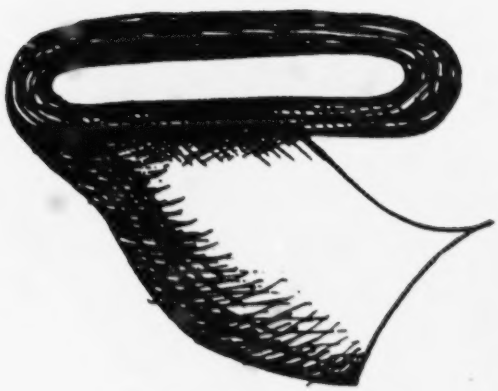
Alba Fernandez

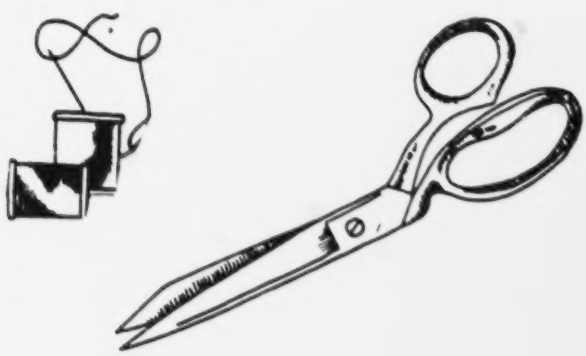
My First Sewing Experience

When I was seventeen years old I wanted to go to a party, but I didn't have a nice dress. I asked too many people to make me a dress, but nobody wanted to. I had a little experience watching my mother when she was sewing clothes for us, so I said to myself, don't be afraid. I took fabric, scissors and began. I didn't know how to start, so I took a dress of mine, ripped it, traced it onto paper and made my dress. When I showed up at the party, everybody asked me, "Who made that dress for you?" and nobody could believe that I made it.

Since that day, I have never bothered anybody to make a dress for me.

Christina Herrera



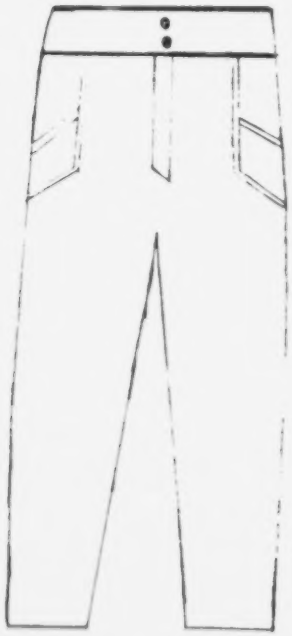


I Sewed My First Trousers

From child to grown-up, all my clothing was sewed by my mother. Now if I hadn't moved to New York and if the garment industry wasn't so prosperous in the United States, I don't think I would be interested in sewing. I seldomly sew, but I never forgot when I sewed my first trousers.

It happened eight years ago when I was about sixteen years old. I used blue nylon fabric. During the work, I made lots of mistakes with the trousers. I stitched the front and the back wrong and I sewed the thread zigzag instead of straight. I had to make repairs once, twice, even three times. When I finished the whole trousers, I felt it had been very difficult. I think sewing is a special skill. It looks easy, but it isn't.

Pei Hong Wu



(Pei Hong Wu)

THE FIRST TIME I SEWED SOMETHING

The first time I sewed. I was sewing a pair of pants. The material was linen. I was seventeen years old. I felt happy. I like to sew.

by Raul Estrada

My First Dress

The first dress I made had a pleated skirt with six pleats in the front and six pleats in the back. The pockets were decorated with flowers, the sleeves were short with shirring. It was yellow cotton which was very popular in Haiti at that time. Now I prefer black and white.

I was 18 years old when I made that dress. I wore it to an after-New Year's party on January 2nd. Everybody liked it very much.

Jacqueline Claude

Jacqueline Claude

FIRST THING

The first thing I sewed was pants for myself. I sewed that at home. I didn't have experience in cutting, so when I cut them I forgot to cut the notches. After cutting I started to sew. I sewed the pockets first. Later I sewed all the seams and the zipper. Then I sewed the waist band. I finished the pants and tried them on. When I pulled them up I found problems. I sewed the front pockets on the back because I forgot to cut the notches. So when I sewed I didn't know which side was front or back, so I had to sew them again. Now I have experience how to sew and cut everything because I go to school and I take pattern making class.

Karen Ng

MY INTEREST IN SEWING

by Francis Zweig

When I was a little girl, I began sewing by hand in school. I sewed dresses for my little dolls.

In my last year of elementary school we were given the opportunity to make blouses for babies leaving the maternity hospital.

The first time I used a sewing machine was when I was 13 years old. The machine was my mother's. A short time later my father bought me a sewing machine of my very own. I began by making little decorations. The first clothes I made at home were for my sister Sarah. Sometimes I made clothes for my friends and neighbors.

When I was 14 I went to fashion school in Guatemala City. There I first learned to make baby clothes. When I was 16 I attended a more advanced fashion school. The projects here were clothing for adults. It was while attending the second fashion school I first thought of attending a fashion school in the United States. My sister Julia had emigrated to New York where she worked as a seamstress. When she visited Guatemala she brought sample patterns and told me about the fashion schools in New York.

I emigrated to the Unites States when I was 19.

My first seamstress position was in Stern Decorators, Inc. in the Bronx, a drape factory. One of Stern Decorators' outlets was Bloomingdales. I was a member of 76B-92-76, United Furniture Workers of America.

For the past 3 1/2 years I have worked as a seamstress for Shanna Infant Wear in the Bath Beach section of Brooklyn.

I have a sewing machine at home. I make many of my own clothes.

Alicia Raul, Catalina, Margarita, Rafael, Delfina, Carmen, Maria, Yolanda, and Saiah (from left to right)

MY FIRST GARMENT

by Delfina Ramirez

I am happy because I made a skirt. It was lilac. It was pretty. It fit me very well.

I made the jacket too. It took me four weeks to make. It has pretty colors. It was orange and melon.

MY FIRST GARMENT

by Alicia Gonzalez

I am happy because I finished my jacket. I marked the buttons today, it is a beautiful color and has beautiful seams.

I began a flap, the color is black. It is simple and I am very happy with the way it is coming out.

I make pants.

I like my pants.

I make a skirt.

The skirt is beautiful.

They were squares of color.

My teacher is a perfect teacher.

I feel good in the class.

I feel happy for 3 hours, two days.

Raul Estrada

MY FIRST GARMENT

Six months ago I decided to learn how to sew. I enrolled at the school of fashion. My first work was a jacket. I chose cotton blended with polyester. I was afraid because I never tried that before. The pattern looked easy and I thought maybe I can do it. I began pinning the pattern onto the cloth with pins, then I cut the fabric, based the pieces and finally sewed them. I took a lot of time doing the garment and made some mistakes.

My teacher always was suprising me on what I was doing: ripping, cutting and sewing again. One month ago, I finished. This is my first garment made by me and I'm happy.

Now, I am making a robe. It is wine color. I'm trying to do the best that I can. I spent six weeks making it. I hope I finish it very soon.

Margarita Ramirez

THE FIRST TIME I TRIED TO SEW

The first time I tried to sew on the machine was here in my classroom. I had tried another time, but here I really sewed the whole blouse. Before I sewed only piece work.

I felt good because I didn't think I could sew, but day by day I learn a little more and this makes me very happy.

I sewed cotton material. I used a Singer machine. I wanted to learn how to sew on the machine because this is very important for finding a job and for my life. I wish to learn more and sew more.

Maria Catalina Marquez

MY FIRST GARMENT

by Maria Aviles

I made a jacket. It was grey. It is very pretty.

I made a skirt. It was a pretty pink color. I liked it very much.

I made another jacket, it is light grey. I like it. It is not finished. The class is very good.

The Red and Black Dress

This dress is made of cotton material. The color of this dress is red and black. The front has a jewel neckline, while the back is a low v-neck to show the back. It has short sleeves and a 4-line skirt which is edge-stiched.

This dress has no zipper or snaps. It has an elastic band. It is worn in the summer. This dress is very comfortable and very simple. It goes with high heels and a red necklace. I already sewed this dress for my sister and myself in a different fabric.

Ngoi Wah Cheng (Senny)

Wah Cheng (Senny)

MY FIRST DRESS

by Joyce Lam

I remember doing the first garment by myself when I studied sewing in high school. After I finished it I felt happy and satisfied because it fit well.

My first step in making the dress was to go to the fabric shop to choose the fabric. I bought two yards of light beige wool; then I designed the style of the dress, and drew the pattern. After the teacher corrected it, I did the layout of the fabric and cut it. I thought sewing was difficult for me. I did it very carefully and slowly. As a result, I did it well. I did one more dress, using different fabric, to give my sister. She was very happy.

Joyce Lam

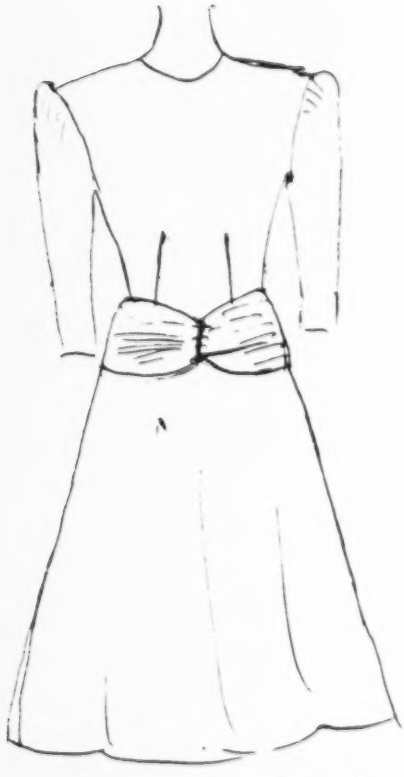
MY FIRST DRESS

by Hardy Leung

I remember studying pattern making in Hong Kong at the Y.M.C.A. about ten years ago. I did my first dress with fitted sleeves. I drew a pattern and bought 2 yards of yellow cotton fabric and then cut and sewed the dress.

It was difficult for me, but I finished at last. My first dress fit very well and I was very happy.

It was an interesting experience for me. The style of the dress was casual and I wore it often.



I Like the Dress

I have a very well-fitting dress. When I wear the dress, people say it is good looking and I like the style very much.

I used black and green polyester fabric when I made it. It was very difficult for me to make because the pattern didn't fit me. I had to change the measurements and change the style a little bit. The original style had a lot of gathers under the waist. I didn't like this style, so I changed it. But I didn't have pattern experience so I could only use the original pattern to finish the seams. I tried it on, but it didn't fit. so I had to rip out the stitches three times until it fit well.

by Jennifer

I was introduced to sewing in the 8th grade in Junior High School. I liked it and became so interested that I majored in Dress Design at Washington Irving High School. In 1969, I went to the Fashion Institute of Technology, and specialized in Diversified Apparel.

After graduation, I had difficulty finding a designer or fashion related job, and I entered the world of key punch. For about five years, I was an numerical key punch operator. In the evening I did free lance work, sewing for companies and individuals.

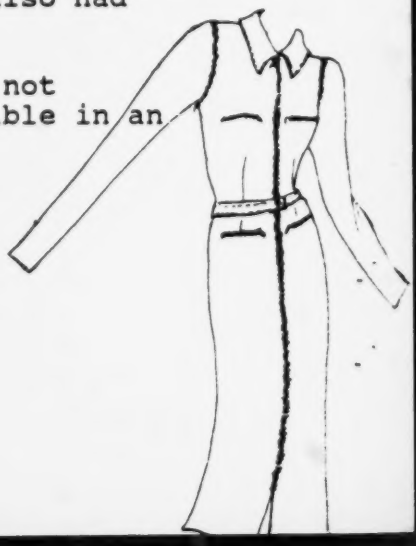
Then I got a job in the fashion market during the day because I longed to work at it. My position went from Sample Maker to Patternmaker and then to Assistant Designer. That is what I was doing when I was called to teach with the Worker-Family Education Program, here at the High School of Fashion Industries in the evening.

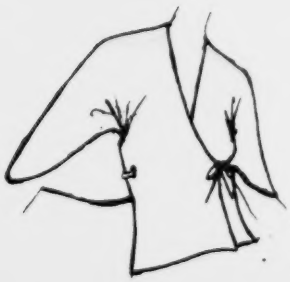
While working in the fashion market, I developed a style that became typical of me. For example, I designed a flowing cape halter. My mother declared that my customers would need a map to figure out how to get into it. If the styling of a garment is simple, it is not De' Washington's design. Another style that I love to make is two-piece dressing, so that I get at least three different looks: 1. Worn together, the blouse and skirt looked like a dress. 2. The blouse could be worn with another skirt. 3. The skirt could be worn with another blouse.

The design that I took great pride in making was the denim versatile coat. It had ten zippers, all of different lengths, of course, when you saw me I would be wearing a zippered denim coat. But I could zip off at the waist, 1, which was under a band with a snap extension, and only have on a jacket, with a dress or something else underneath. Then you might see me in the vest of the coat by zipping off the sleeves 2 and 3. This vest could be worn with or without a collar, 4, because a zipper was at the neck also. I got into the coat, top and bottom, by the center front separating zippers 5 and 6. There were breast and high hip pockets that also had zippers, 7, 8, 9, 10.

But for a De' Washington design, that was not complicated enough. So, I made this coat reversible in an allover print brush cotton.

by De' Washington





WHY I DECIDED TO LEARN TO SEW

by Janice Simon

My father passed away when I was nine years old. My mother had seven small children and one on the way. The latter was born one month after the death of my father. I was the oldest of the eight children in this country. I had two older brotheres and one sister in Antigua and Santo Domingo.

When I was eleven years old, my mother decided to send me to camp with the Harlem Boys Club. Since I had no father, there wasn't much money for a lot of clothing. I had saved a few dollars and my mother gave me a few more to help me buy material, thread and patterns. I went to the five and ten cents store where I was able to buy severeal pieces of material @ 4 yards for $1.00. I made shorts, halters, two skirts and baleros, two dresses and a bathing suit.

THE FIRST GARMENT I MADE

by Janice Simon

My first garment was made when I was eleven years old. I was ready to go to camp for two weeks therefore I needed skirts, shorts, blouses and halters.

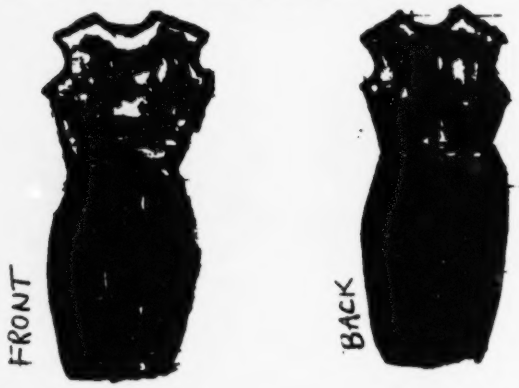
The very first thing I made was a skirt and a vest set. The skirt was semi-flare with one kick pleat down the center front. The vest was a plain open vest with long sleeves.

Shorts, blouses and halters I made afterwards.All of these took time but I tried to make them well.

MY FAVORITE ARTICLE

by Petra Rios

My favorite article that I have sewn is a dress.

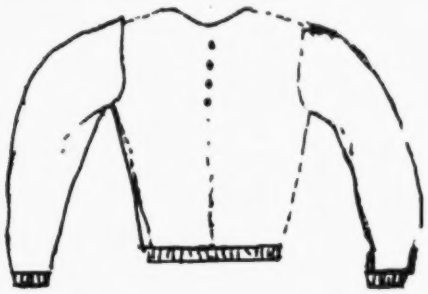


My dress is pink and black. The blouse is pink the skirt is black. It is size medium.

MY FAVORITE ARTICLE

by Graciela Duque

My favorite article that I have sewn is a sweater.



Those sweaters are useful in winter, especially in New York. This sweater is in wool-knit cut, one front, one back. In the front it is open just in the line of the sleeve.

MY FAVORITE ARTICLE

by Rafaela Resto Rios

My favorite article that I have sewn is a dress.

My dress is pink and very beautiful.

MY FAVORITE ARTICLE

by Ana

My favorite article that I have sewn is a dress.

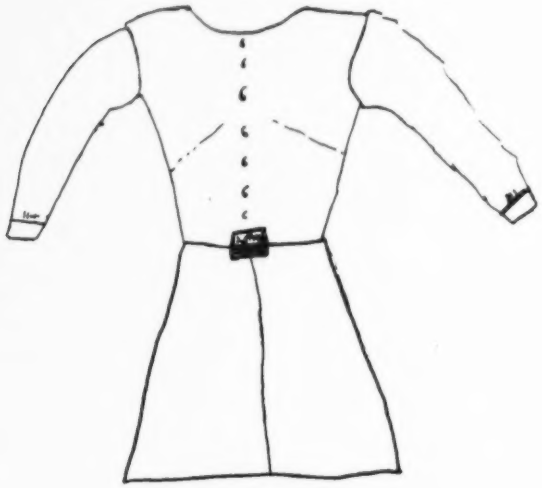
My dress has four buttons. It is black.

MY FAVORITE ARTICLE

My favorite article is a dress.

I am making a drawing of the dress. It has buttons and long sleeves. It has a low neck with a belt. The color is green and the size is medium.

by Linda



In the years 1951 to 1958 in my country, I made the clothes of my children. It is beautiful to make shirts for my boy and skirts for my girl and for me.

I know this year is wonderful for me. I practice seams and practice speaking English. I hope to progress in this school.

Alicia Gonzalez

In 1978, I was fourteen years old when my mother made a dress. In Ecuador we celebrate when the girls are fifteen years old. It's different from the United States. In the United States the parents celebrate when the girls are 16 years old. That's why my mother made a big and beautiful dress. I didn't know what she made for me. I thought it was for another girl because her birthday was two weeks later than my birthday.

My mother was making the dress for one month and three weeks. I said to my mother, "Make a little cake for my birthday," but she told me she'll give me a trip to Mexico. The day was coming, I thought she forgot my birthday because she didn't buy the ticket for my trip, but I didn't care because I stayed with her when I was fifteen years old.

She came to New York when I was 11 years old. I was staying with my grandfather and grandmother for three years because my father died when I was five years old. That's why I was happy she was staying with me when I was fifteen years old.

My birthday came and I was surprised about the dress, the party, my big cake and my ticket to Mexico. The dress was old fashion. I was happy. I never will forget it in my life. Two days later, I went to Mexico City. I stayed for two weeks and came back to Ecuador. I think Mexico City is very beautiful.

Elizabeth Zumarraga

Do you think there is something that could be interesting?

OUR CLASS

Our class began as a class in special machines. Our technical teacher is Claire and our English teacher is Jane. We all first learned to thread and work the machines. They are straight stitch, double straight stitch, zig-zag, merrow machines and hemming machines. We made samples of all the different stitiches and pasted them in a notebook, to be a sample book. We made buttonholes, did sherring, sewed appliques, and learned how to lay out a pattern.

Our class continued as a class in basic sewing. We selected fabrics to make the garment; a smock. We used cotton. We had to do and learn many things to make the smock, like getting in sleeves and interfacing. In order to make the smock, we had to learn basic sewing.

We practiced English in each class. We learned words for everything about the machines, we wrote stories, we read dialogues, we practiced our grammer, we got more confidence in English.

After this we will continue sewing another garment we want to make.

We've learned a lot in our class here.

-Group composition from
Basic Sewing class

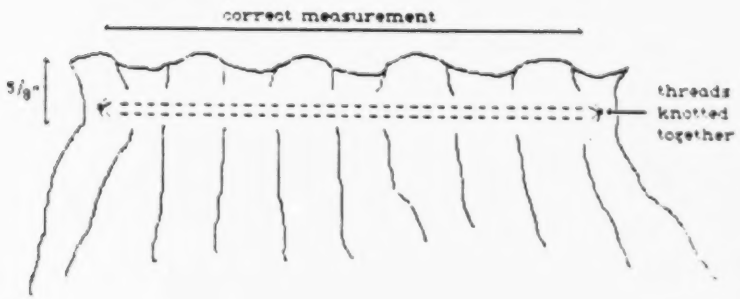
Statement by Sample Room Techniques Class

We took the class because we wanted to speak in English. We wanted to speak in English because we needed to speak to the boss.

We came to school because we wanted to know how to make our own clothes, how to read the patterns, and how to sew. We wanted to make dresses, blouses, and jackets.

We learned to practice on the machine. We know how to use patterns. Most important, we like the unity and understanding of the class.

Gathers or Shirring



SPECIAL MACHINES CLASS

This is a collection of comments by the students on some the things they learned this semester in sewing and English.

I really enjoyed the English and sewing. I learned a lot about many kinds of fabric and many designs. We also learned a lot of general knowledge about things like stores and news.

I learned the names of the parts of the machine in English. I learned that the grain line, selvages and center fold are parallel. I learned about ruler measurement, the names of fractions of an inch, and that 12" = 1'.

I learned the English words for parts of the garment, like pleats, darts, on the fold, and so on. I learned how to finish darts and set-in sleeves.

I learned how to use the merrow machine. Also, how to find the grain line and lay out the fabric--which is very important. I learned how to speak about garments, and how to pronounce words that were difficult for me. For instance, the teacher told me that "thread" sounds like "red", so now I can remember how to say it correctly.

I learned how to pronounce words that I never used before. Now they will stay with me. For example, I learned to say gauge by remembering that it sounds like "page" or "rage".

I didn't know before how to thread the merrow machine, and now I know. I have to try more and more.

I learned the difference between a sloper and a pattern. The sloper has no seam allowance, the pattern does.

I learned fashion and sewing words that are very specialized. For example, different styles of collars and the names of skirts. Also, machine parts that I only knew the Chinese names for before.

I learned how to read measurements, and say them in English. From clothing catalogs, I learned about new styles and new dresses. Catalogs are very good because the fashions are very up-to-date.

There were so many words I didn't know before, including the names of different fabrics. I learned that some synthetic fabrics come from petroleum, and that silk comes from a silkworm.

From an article we read, I learned that fashion is always at least a season ahead. Styles for the winter are often decided in the summer.

I knew how to use the machine before, but now I know the names of the parts. I learned how to thread the merrow, and how to do blind-stitching.

SEWING MACHINE REPAIR CLASS

"In this class we can learn about fixing sewing machines and we also learn some English. For me this is good."

"We learn how to repair sewing machines. It's important for me to learn so I can use this at work. I would like to find a better job as a machinist."

"You get a lot of machines to break. You take them apart and try to put them back together. It's fun."

"You have an advantage over a person who reads in a book. We learned the hard way, and we really know it now."

"This is a good way to learn. Last year I took the cutting class. Yesterday my boss asked me, "Can you make a pattern?" and I said, "Sure." Now the boss asks me when something is wrong with the machines."

"I am going to put this machine to work if I have to take this class three times."

"We learned by hand and we also learned the names of all the parts."

Comments from Machine Repair class

JUST BECAUSE YOU'VE WORKED IN FASHION A LONG TIME YOU THINK YOU KNOW IT ALL?

Are you tired of fights between the bosses, the drapers and the patternmakers?

Are you disgusted with making so many mistakes?

Are you sick of working all day on a pattern that might not work?

SAMPLEMAKERS

Have you had enough low wages and long hours?

Do you want to improve your ENGLISH?

Are you sick of invisible notches?

Do you want to learn something new and interesting?

MACHINE OPERATORS

At ILGWU's

FREE!

PATTERNMAKING CLASS

at the High School of Fashion Technology

You learn the slash + spread + pivot methods
You learn to trace and use a sloper
You learn to use a French Curve
You learn to make patterns for many styles
You learn darts, gathers, seam allowance + more
You learn the names of things at work in ENGLISH
You learn ENGLISH
YOU CAN DO IT TOO!

"I don't have to do it from my head anymore. Now I know the technical way to do it. And it's fun!"

"I designed and made the dress for my son's wedding from what I learned here!"

ABOUT OUR CLASS

Our classmates come from different countries. They are from Ecuador, Columbia, China, Nicaragua and Hong Kong. We help each other. We learn how to make blouses, skirts and shirts. There are two teachers in our class. One teaches how to make patterns and one teaches how to speak English. We have many classmates. There are Chinese and Spanish students. Sometimes we teach each other our language. But in class we just speak English. I want to learn more about my job. So I took patternmaking, because patternmaking is a part of designing. We can create many kinds of clothes. In this class I learned a lot. I like it because I understand everything clearly. I like my classmates. I think we are happy and we try to learn. The time goes quickly because we enjoy the class.

-Ping Kuen Tam

DRAPING CLASS

In order to relate how the Union School is working for the future of its members we have interviewed eight students of the Draping class. Curiously, most of them learned how to sew in their mother countries where their mothers taught them! As class reporter I, Cristina Herrera, conducted the interviews:

The following students were interviewed and are from the countries indicated in parenthesis. Aida Leticia Zumarraga (Ecuador); Wai King Ng (Hong Kong); Zheng Lu (China); Yan Qun Yan (China); Beatriz Madeira (Ecuador); Belgica Polanco (Ecuador); Alba Gloria Fernandez (Guatemala); and Presciliana Matos (Peru).

Below are excerpts of the interviews:

Cristina: How did you know/learn about this class?

Aida: I knew a long time ago. I found out from friends in my company.

Wai King: I knew about this class because I was studying at the Union School (in Chinatown) They told me about this class.

Beatriz: I learned about the school because my friend brought me here.

Belgica: I learned because my sister-in-law took a patternmaking class here.

Cristina: Why did you come here?

Zheng: Because I wanted to study draping to find a better job.

Belgica: Because I want to learn to drape.

Beatriz: Because I want to progress and find a better job.

Cristina: How did you feel on the first day of class?

Yan Qun: I was very happy, but a little nervous, because of the draping and English.

Cristina: How did you begin to sew?

Presciliana: My uncle taught me how to sew because he was a tailor.

Alba: I started to sew in my country. I'm not satisfied and I want to perfect my sewing skills.

Zheng: I learned in China. My mother taught me how to sew and then I went to school to learn more.

Belgica: I learned to sew in my country. My mother taught me.

Beatriz: When I came to this country, my sister-in-law taught me at home how to sew because she said this was the best way to get a job. She told me this since at that time I didn't speak English well.

Aida: My mother sent me to a school because she didn't want to sew herself. I studied four years in my country.

Cristina: Are you working now? What do you do?

Presciliana: Yes, I am. I do piece work. I sew pants and skirts.

Alba: No, I'm not. I would like to work. I cannot wait to work!!

Belgica: Yes, I am. I am a sample maker.

Cristina: What have you learned from this class?

Zheng: I learned how to drape a blouse and skirt.

Wai King: I learned something here. But I want to learn more.

Aida: I came mostly for English.

Beatriz: I have learned English and how to drape a whole dress instead of using a pattern.

Cristina: When this class is finished what do you plan to do? Will you take another class here?

Yan Qun: Maybe I will continue in this class and in patternmaking.

Beatriz: I am not sure. I need to ask somebody what is the next step.

Wai King: Yes, I will take another class. I don't know which one, but I want to continue. I want to learn to be a sample maker.

Presciliana: I want to sew for myself and my family. I am very happy in my job. I would like to take another class, advanced pattern making.

Zheng: I want to continue studying to be a sample maker.

GRADING CLASS

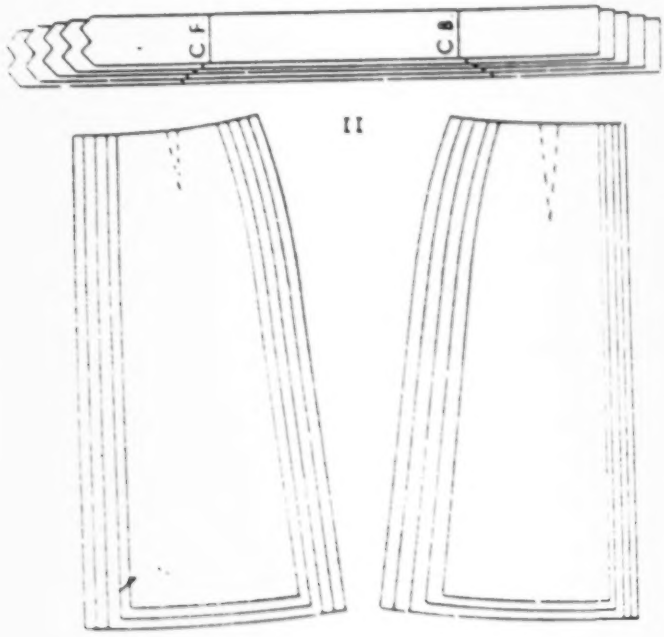
We have people from all over the world - like the United Nations - Jamaica, Puerto Rico, China, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Hong Kong, Ecuador, and Brooklyn. We have two teachers. Allison teaches English and Joe teaches grading. Grading is making a garment's size larger and smaller. When you are grading, all the measurements have to be balanced.

We all work in the garment industry, making clothes. We work hard in the factory as cutters, sample makers, and machine operators.

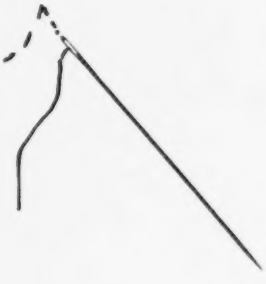
We all joined the Union, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU). The Union protects the workers. Like no one can be fired for no reason, and we get benefits, for example good health care.

Right now it's slow for jobs in the garment industry. Also the seasons are changing styles, so we don't have much work.

Everyone in the class gets along harmoniously and we all look forward to being professional graders.



The Church Help Each Other When We Work



A JEALOUS HUSBAND

Husband: Why do you go to school everyday? You make me do a lot of housework.

Wife: Oh, because I want to learn more English, so I can change my job.

Husband: I think you are not telling the truth.

Wife: Why don't you want me to get a better job and more money?

Husband: I'm afraid you will meet a boyfriend at school.

Wife: Why don't you trust me?

Husband: Because if you have more knowledge then you will meet more people. You will get more choices.

Wife: What choices?

Husband: You could choose another man.

Wife: You are a very nice man. I don't want to get man.

Husband: Why didn't you stay home and make dinner for me?

Wife: You are a selfish man. Now I will cook dinner for you..

-Lily Chan and Marco Szeto

Coming to class has its ups and downs. For example, going to school at night is very difficult. My problem is I always feel tired when I leave work. Doing my homework is always difficult because my kids make a lot of noise and I can't concentrate. Getting out of work on time is always tedious, especially when we are very busy. Also, bad weather makes it very hard to get to school.

Missing dinner is bad for my concentration because I am too hungry to think properly. My family eats before me because I get home too late from school. Cooking dinner after class is very difficult because it's too late, and I don't have time to rest.

We have to make a lot of sacrifices, but in class everybody learns to spell English and to use it properly to express yourself. If you know English, you can get to meet people from all different parts of the world, to share each other's problems.

Also, if you know more English and improve your grading skills, you can get a better and decent job, because the idea is to get a better position at work. If you get a better position, automatically you get a better salary and everybody will respect you on the job and the communication with employers and co-workers will be better.

Group composition by Cecil McBean, Tomas Talavera
Julio Morello, and Joseph Bellino

My name is Benny Ayala. I'm from Puerto Rico. I'm living in New York City for about three years. I'm learning sewing machine repair.

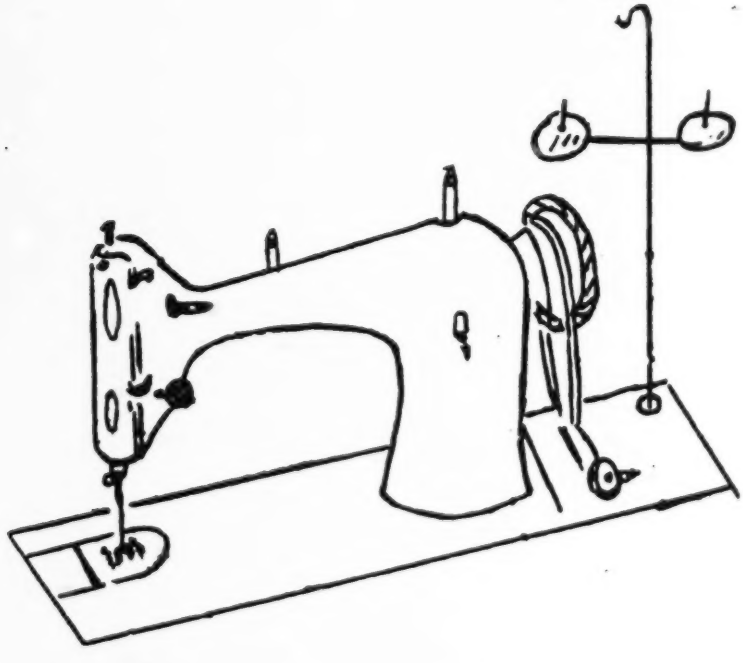
When I was a little boy, I used to watch my mother work at the sewing machine and I remember all the trouble she used to have trying to repair the machine. Maybe that is how I became interested in sewing machine repair and like what I'm doing.

Bienvenido Ayala

Hi! My name is Yan Qun Yan. I come from China. My first language is Chinese. In the year of 1983, my family came together to America. Now I live in Brooklyn. I like to come into New York City. Everyday I take the "B" train to go to work. I like my job. I make whole dresses at my job. After work, because I'm a member of the ILGWU, I take classes.

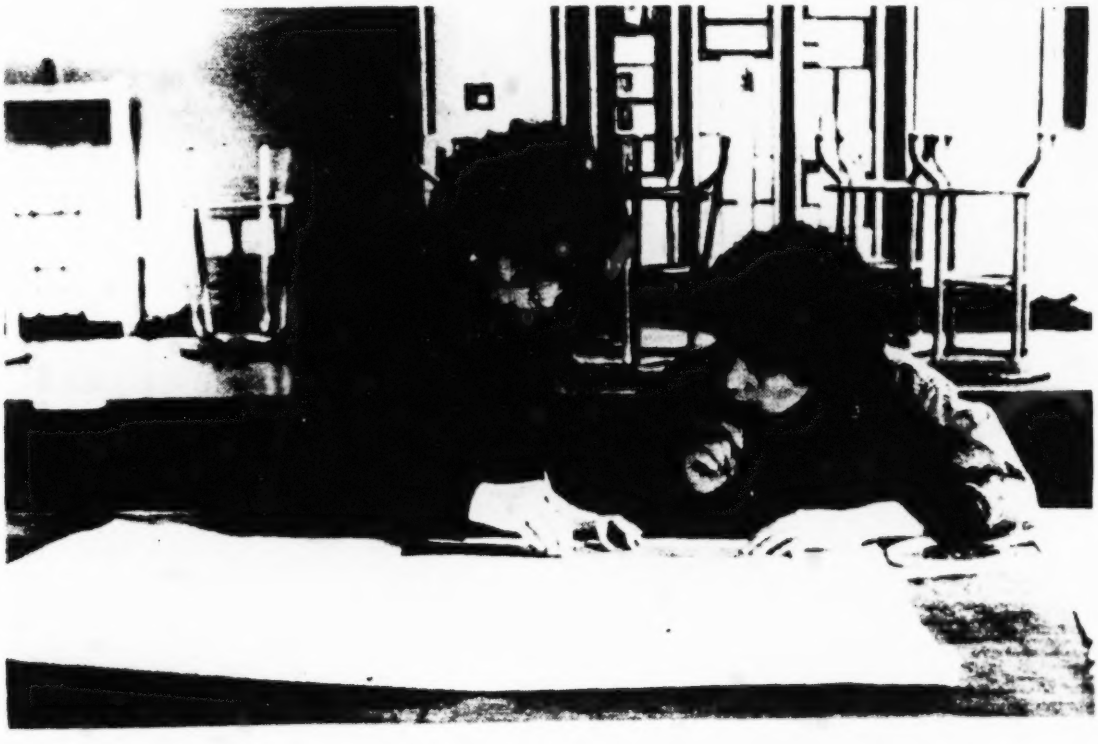
I signed up for the technical/ESL classes at the High School of Fashion at 225 West 24th Street from 5:15 to 8:15 on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. I study English and Draping. My English teacher's name is Kinnard. She is a good teacher. She is teaching me English now. I want to learn English and Draping because I need it to get a good job. I study very hard.

Yan Qun Yan



I love the patternmaking class. I feel so happy in this class because I'm learning a lot about the patterns. Now I know how to cut different styles of patterns. All the students are very nice friends; we always help each other when somebody needs it. Also, I am learning to read and speak English well.

-Marlene



I took this course because I wanted to learn more about sewing. I want to learn something for work. I used to work on the Singer machine. I was a machine operator. I made belts, zippers, pockets, hems, handkerchiefs and sometimes I put in elastic. I don't work now because I have three children. Two of them are going to school and the little one is with me at home.

Now I want to be a good patternmaker because I want to increase my wages. (I don't have any wages now but one day I will work again.) In this class I learned how to make children's princess style, bell sleeves, cap sleeves, pleated skirts, gore skirts and more.

-Dora Argueta

The Christmas Party

We had a great Christmas party in our patternmaking class. Everybody wore beautiful clothes and we danced a lot to nice music. Everybody sang Christmas songs. All the men wanted to dance with Rebecca. She dances well. So does everybody else.

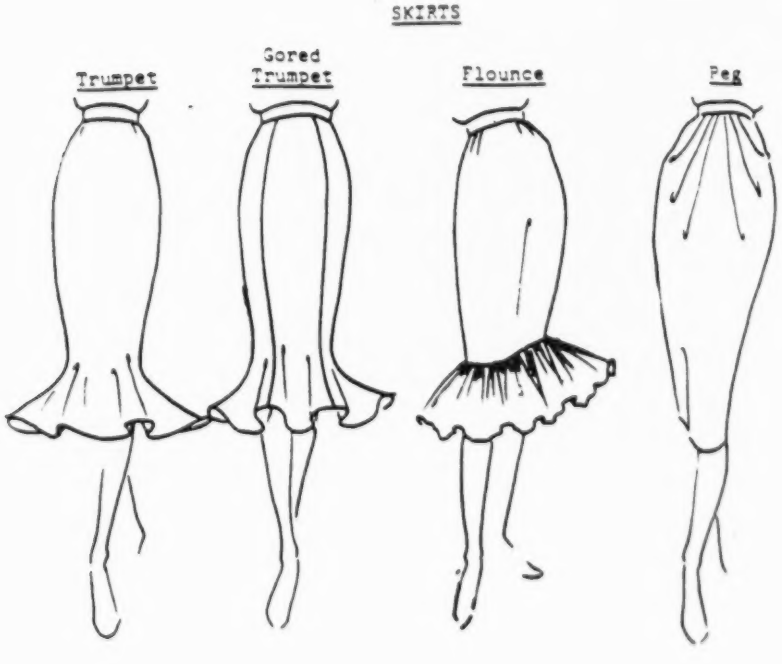
Everybody brought delicious food to class. We ate lots of food. We drank wine and some soda. Karen tried to do Spanish dances. She did well. The elevator guy helped her. The students gave Deborah and Vickie beautiful presents. They were very touched. They were speechless.

Deborah and Vickie tried to sing the songs in Spanish and the students sang beautifully in English.

Rebecca had a camera and took lots of pictures.

Vickie tried to do the dances too. Deborah knew how to dance Latin dances. We were elegant that night. We have only women in this class. In another class there are only men. Deborah went and returned with the men. The guys were elegant too. We ate together and danced a lot. We enjoyed ourselves.

-Group composition from
Patternmaking class



MY TEAMMATE

Tomas: Julio, why didn't you go to school yesterday?

Julio: I did not go to school yesterday because I felt too tired to take English class.

Tomas: The class was very interesting.

Julio: Yes I know, each day the English class is getting more interesting, but I was very hungry and tired.

Tomas: In this country, English is very important for us, so try to learn, because you will get a better job in the future.

Julio: You are absolutely right, but I promise you I will never miss another class, because I know English is very important to us. Especially to us because we are beginners.

Tomas: Julio, last Sunday I saw Luis' team playing soccer in Central Park against Armando's team. Did you see it?

Julio: Last Sunday, after our game finished, I went to the movies with my girlfriend, so I missed Luis' team's game, but my brother told me the game was very exciting.

Julio Morello and Tomas Talavera

A WORKER COMES HOME

Wife: What did you do in school today?

Husband: Don't ask me what I did in school today. Just serve me my dinner, because I am hungry. Later we will talk.

Wife: Honey, your dinner is served.

Husband: Oh dinner is delicious my love. Thank you. (and a kiss).

Wife: I cooked your favorite food. Honey, did you get paid today? I want to go shopping tomorrow. (and another kiss and hug).

Husband: My love, here is the money, but don't spend all of it. I have to pay some bills. (another kiss and hug.)

Wife: Honey, how did school go?

Husband: My love, let's go into the living room and watch T.V. and I'll tell you how school went.

(They go into the living room.)

Husband: In my school, I learned to make a new style with a four piece blouse and a 2 piece skirt.

Wife: That sounds hard.

Husband: No, it is not hard if you pay attention to the teacher's explanation.

Wife: Well, I know you work hard all day, and study hard all night. No wonder you're so hungry when you come home.

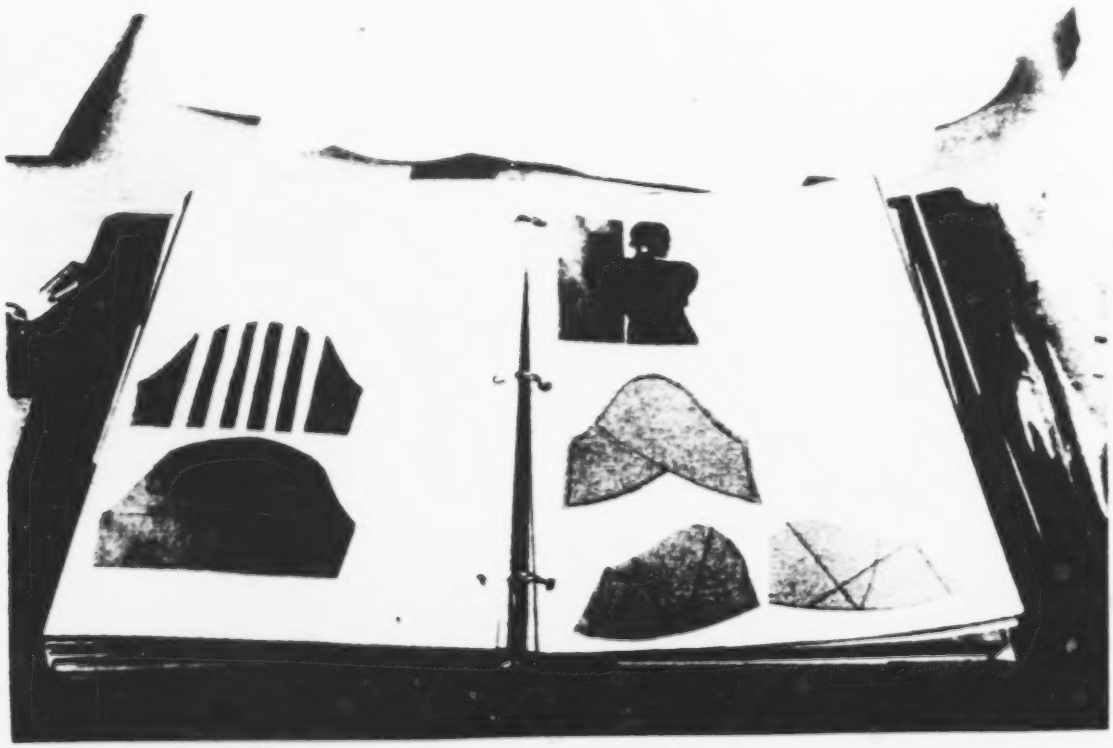
Husband: My love, I think everything is easy if you like what you are doing and this is very important for me.

-Armando Terranova and Sonia Lopez

We understand the advantages and disadvantages of going to school. To get out of work on time is hard, because the supervisor is always in a rush for the work. When we finish the work it's hard to come to school with the changing weather we have here. Especially when we feel tired and the traffic is bad when it's raining. While we are here on empty stomachs, our families eat before we come home. And when we miss our dinner, we can not concentrate that well. It's hard because we have to go home and cook dinner and get housework done and homework done.

But it's worth the effort to learn something for the future. We come to school to improve our English and grading skills. Then we can get a better position at work, get a better salary, more respect on the job, and also better communication with employers and co-workers. With better English we can meet people from all different parts of the world Because in this class people come from different countries. If everybody speaks their own language, we can't communicate. So we can learn to express ourselves better and we can share each other's problems.

Group composition by Armando Terranova, Sonia Lopez, Enrique Valentin, Luis Cuevas, Marco Szeto, and Lily Chan



5/18/89

Dear Friends,

My name is Duron. I will explain some about my life to you. Since I lived in Haiti, I had been thinking about the United States. You know why? Because I wanted to know other countries. That is the reason I came here.

I came to the United States on April 20, 1982. At that time I was glad to see all my friends who lived in the United States too. It is a very beautiful country. But I saw a lot of things I never saw in my country. I really like it. That is the reason I live in this country. It is the greatest country in the world. The reason why is that people can find anything they want in this country.

I started to work in this country on July 11, 1982. I've never been in trouble since I came here. I did everything right because I don't want to be in trouble with anyone. I always respect everyone beside me. I 'll do my job right, what my boss tells me to do. I respect myself too. I hope that all I had to explain to you about my life was interesting.

I love this class. I hope I will continue in this class until the end of the semester. So I thank everyone who has taught me in this class. Also, I think God will bless everyone by my side. I would like to say goodbye now to everyone. See you soon.

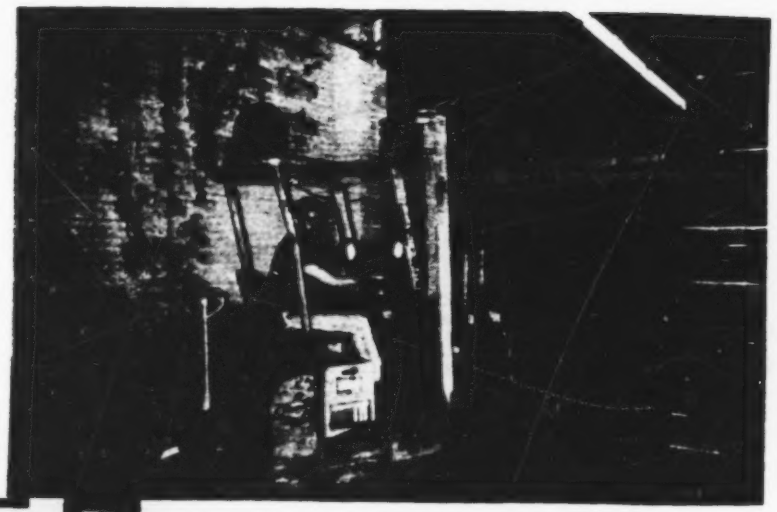
Sincerely,

Duron Dauphin

I don't know
how to talk about
what I do
for a living

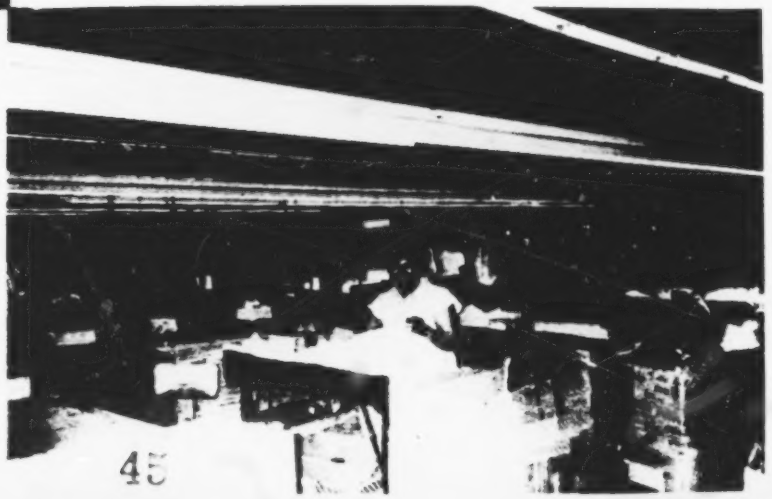
A TOUR OF OUR FACTORY

We are employees of Exquisite Form Company, 14 Pelham Manor, Bronx. We work in different departments in two different buildings, one in receiving and one in shipping. We work thirty-five hours a week. We begin work at eight thirty and finish at four fifteen.



First we are in the receiving department with Pablo. When the boxes come in from the trailer, Pablo helps to unload them. The boxes contain brassieres and they come from Mexico and the Philippines. Pablo enjoys his job because it's not boring.

Next Raul opens the boxes and classifies the merchandise styles. He checks the list of merchandise and the bundles to see if they are correct. He puts the bundles into the small boxes. Then another worker puts cards with the style, color, price and size into the correct bundles.



Next the foreman gives the bundles to Margarita. She opens the bundles and examines the labels and the merchandise.

Dalgis also works in this department. She uses the sewing machine, the scissor machine or the tag machine.

Then the bundles go to the packing department where Olympia works. She is supposed to pack twenty-five boxes every day for the company but she packs thirty to forty boxes because it is more money for her. There are seventy-two pieces in each box. Olympia checks the cards before she packs the boxes. If the card is incorrect her supervisor calls Xiomara.

Xiomara checks the card for the color, price and style. She puts the cards back in the correct place in the bins.

Gloria works in return inspection where merchandise is returned to the factory from stores. She looks at each brassiere to see if it is good. She takes out the ones that aren't good. She checks the ticket. She checks to see how many dozen are in each bundle.

Now we go to the other building where Jose is a shipping clerk. He works in different things everyday. He likes his job because it is busy. In the morning he has to do the empty bins. The bin is the place where the workers put the merchandise. His work is if the bin is empty he has to write the style, color and cup of the brassiere on a paper and give to to the office. Sometimes he has to do a transfer. When somebody needs some merchandise and it's not in this building he calls the other building, and if they don't have it the order is cancelled.

Last of all we are with Melba. She also works in the shipping department. Her job is to pick the orders and sometimes check the orders. She works in different places every day in the shipping department.

After work we study English two days a week. We are happy for the opportunity to learn English.

I am a machine operator. I became a machine operator many years ago when I came to this country. At that time I didn't have any idea of how to thread the machine or how to turn the machine on and off. I was always thinking what I had to do to start it again when the thread finished.

But now it's easier for me because I do understand everything. I can work on different kinds of machines and really it's very easy for me to be a machine operator.

I want to be a good Pattern Maker. I came to the patternmaking class because I heard I could learn many things; like tracing a sloper, making darts, seam allowances and many more things. Later I will have the opportunity to make more money.

Maria Herrera

What It's Like Being a Samplemaker

Being a machine operator is very frustrating. It is not always that you have a perfect cut. Sometimes by using different material you end up having different problems; some shrinking, some stretching. Sometimes you have to work and work and you can never get the dress right. Imagine how hard it is to work like that; how much you have to accomplish before getting a decent salary.

Marie Fouche interviews Antonia Vita

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING A SAMPLE MAKER AND BEING A MACHINE OPERATOR

Being a samplemaker is not too hard, and then it is not that easy either. It depends on how much experience you have and the ability to do the work. Being a sample maker is also knowing how to make samples from a pattern, and how to put all of the parts of a dress together.

You have many frustrations from the boss and the Pattern Maker. Not all the time do you agree how to put the pieces the same way. So you have to have a lot of patience and a lot of ideas.

Antonia Vita interviews
Marie Fouche

Nine years ago, I immigrated to the United States with my family from Canton, China. I had an opportunity to immigrate because my father and mother were already here. I wanted to come to the U.S. because I hoped my children would have a good future and more freedom for all of us. Although I came to the U.S., I always miss my mother country and my old friends because I lived there and worked there for a long time. I can't forget anything there.

I was a teacher when I lived in Canton, China. I taught high school science for more than ten years. When I taught high school science, I had to prepare the lessons, write down a lesson plan and expained the lesson and showed some experiments to the students. Sometimes I gave a test to the students.

Since I came to the United States, I felt that my language problem made it difficult for me to communicate. I can't get a job as a teacher.

I got a job as a garment factory worker. I sew complete garments such as shirts, dresses and pants. When I sew these garments, I know how to sew hems, put in waistbands and button holes. I think it is important for me in a job to be healthy and be with friendly workers because they can help me make money.

by MEI Yin

HELPFUL COWORKERS (A Friend in Need)

Ricky: Joe, I'm going to school and I need some money for carfare and to eat something.

Joe: How much money do you need?

Ricky: Well, I need ten dollars. Can you help me?

Joe: Yes, I can help you with ten dollars.

Ricky: I will pay you next week if that's all right with you.

Joe: It's okay with me. Anytime you need help come to me. If I have money I will lend it to you.

Ricky: Well, thank you Joe. It's good to have a coworker like you.

Joe: I'm glad that I'm able to help you, and I would do the same for the other coworkers.

Enrique Valentin and Tomas Talavera

MY JOB

I work in a bank as a security guard. Before I came to the U.S.A., I never thought about that. Actually, there are a lot of matters in the world that we can't choose freely. However, I must do my best in my work.

Every morning, I open the door of the bank and let the customers in. Then I go to the post office to pick up the mail for our branch. In the bank, I answer some simple questions that customers ask. I also tell them the right section they ought to go to. There are many Chinese customers in our branch. Some of them don't understand English. So I help them to fill out the deposit slips and withdrawal slips. I tell the customers how to use the automatic teller machine. I also must keep the bank clean and keep good order in the bank.

Sometimes, the bank is very busy. It was the busiest time earlier last year. Then the bank was crowded by customers every day. The line bent around a few times from this wall to the other. I had never seen anything like that. I didn't know why all the customers came in the bank. That puzzled me and also annoyed the customers.

"Why are there so many customers in the bank?" a customer asked.

"All the customers need our bank to help them," I replied and asked him, "Do you know what Chinese year this is?"

"Dragon."

"Yes, so the line likes a long dragon!" I said.

"You are right!" the customer smiled.

Once this year, the line in the bank was very long. A customer was unhappy. I made a joke to him, "This is the Year of the Snake. The line likes it!" He smiled.

But what a funny explanation! The animals in Chinese years helped me. But I don't want any more long lines in the bank next year. Because next year will be the Year of the Horse. If there is a long line in the bank, I won't know how to explain it to the customers! Why didn't the ancient Chinese people change horse to giraffe?

Yi Zheng Yu

Susy: Friday is a holiday, because we get paid.

Tilda: We're going shopping on Saturday.

Susy: To spend the money.

The Boss: Easy come, easy go.

Susy: I'm going back to work because I have no more money.

Tilda: We need to work hard on Monday to make the money for the coming Saturday and Sunday.

Afon: (Running after the boss) There's a problem with the seam allowance.

The Boss: Stop the work!

Tilda: Go and take the work and check it bundle by bundle.

Tilda: I will do it right away.

The Boss: Thank you.

Tilda: (Checking the work) I don't want to work today. I want to go home.

Group piece by patternmaking students in Barabara and Tamra's class.

I am a machine operator. I started with practicing on the seams because I didn't know how to operate the machine. My floor lady showed me how. Then I took a piece of material and started sewing. In a few months I was a perfect machine operator.

I like my job because I make a lot of money and all my girl friends are very good and help each other. Everyday at work I talk to my friends about religion and many more things. I want to be a patternmaker because I want to make more money and also I want to make my own clothes.

-Carmen Quinones

Liang Hui: I am a machine operator.

Pak Chi: Me too.

Liang Hui: What are you doing today?

Pak Chi: Today I am sewing a zipper. Yang Huey, how did you feel in the factory today?

Liang Hui: I felt bad because the new boss gives the easy work to her friends, and we have to do the hard work.

Pak Chi: She likes her friends more. We had to finish a lot - 400 pieces. But when we finished almost 200 pieces she says, "Hurry up! Hurry up! Finish the work and take it home."

But I said, "Tell your friends to do it!"

Liang Hui: We should get the easy and the hard parts, not just the hard part.

Pak Chi: We should go to the union and talk about it.

Liang Hui Zhang and Pak Chi Fong

I'm working as a cutter in the clothing industry for about 25 years. I just want to tell you what I do for a living. The supervisor where I work is a nice person to get along with. He treats everybody fairly.

He is from Puerto Rico. I think that if he was from here he could do more for the workers like getting a coffee break and raises. This man has been working in this company for about 25 years. I think he started working there at a very young age, and learned the trade from them and that's why he's so frightened of the boss. When he sees the boss, he panics and tries to put panic on the rest of the workers. Even if they are working, he will come over and say, "The boss is around."

About the boss, he resembles the Scrooge (that's the one that hates Christmas). The only thing I like about this place is that whenever I'm late, the supervisor takes care of my time card. I'm not happy there, but I don't let anything there bother me.

by Enrique Valentin

Boss: I am a sick man. Don't make me get mad. Just work.

Worker: But we just want an area to have our lunch with a big table and chairs.

Boss: Eat on the table you work on. We don't have the space or an area for lunch.

Worker: If we eat out lunch on the tables, we are going to get the work dirty.

Boss: You have to be careful with your food or go down the steps and have your lunch.

Worker: But remember, we have only thirty minutes.

Boss: I'll see what I can do for you guys.

Worker: Thank you.

Eddy: Hi, Julio.

Julio: Hi, Eddy.

Eddy: What kind of jobs do they do here?

Julio: We are cutters and spreaders.

Eddy: I don't have that much experience.

Julio: Don't worry about it. I will teach you how to handle the cutting machine and spreading machine.

Eddy: Okay, that will be fine. How do you handle the cutting ticket to spread this garment?

Julio: You break it down by sizes and color.

Eddy: Oh, that's very simple. I can do this work.

Julio: Any questions, ask me.

Eddy: Thank you. I hope you don't mind.

Julio: The point is, if you never make mistakes, you will never get in trouble.

Julio Morello and Eddy Vargas

Worker: May I leave early?

Boss: Please, you can't leave early today because I need to finish this lot.

Worker: But Mr. Joe, I don't feel well.

Boss: Please, I would appreciate it if you do this for me.

Worker: I have to stay because you asked me politely. Do you have any Anacin?

by Joseph Bellino
Tomas Talavera

My name is Katie Ramjattan and I am employed at Young Stuff Apparel Group. It is located at 1411 Broadway on the 10th floor. This company makes large size sportswear clothes It is interesting working with Pattern Makers and Designers. I enjoy working with these kind of people.

My employer, his staff and fellow employees are all very friendly, full of understanding and always willing to help each other if there is a problem in the job. This is what makes my job a little more interesting and I like to work with them. These are some of the good things about my job.

There are also some things which I don't like. To begin with whenever someone gives me something to sew there is always a rush. Most of the time I do the fitting of the garment. I would do the duplicate and when there is not enough to sew they would use me to cut. The bad thing about it is they do not pay well. So I am looking for a better job I am also looking, if I could find myself a patternmaking job.

Worker: Mr. Lamb, may I take a month off? I'm sick.

Lamb: I will talk to Bob and see if he okays it.

THREE DAYS LATER

Worker: What did Bob say about me taking one month off?

Lamb: He said you can take more than one month if it is needed for your health.

Worker: Thank you very much. I will take the month of July.

Lamb: I hope you will return in good health.

Marco Szeto and Lily Chan

MY FOREMAN

by Julio Morello

My foreman is an old man, who walks slowly. Also, he is a sick man. He is a pushy man in the company because the company pays him for production. Every cut we make has to be a perfect cut, or we'll have problems with the big boss.

Right now he is very ill (he has cancer). The doctor thinks his cancer spread throughout his body. He is scared. Yesterday I saw him sweat a lot, and this morning he reported to the hopsital. I feel very sorry for him. He is a sick man and doesn't need the money, because he has a lot, and still he is hard working.

I am working in a factory which is one of the best factories I have ever worked in. I make good money because the rules of working are very different from other factories.

Our director, or foreman is a man who is in business with us. He is a kind of person which we call CABALLO (horse) because he works like one of them. And he wants everybody to work like him.

He is a strong man. One of the strongest I have ever known. He never feels tired or he never shows it. It doesn't matter what kind of work it is, and that's the way he wants you to feel too. Enough. He wants more and more work and forgets that you can be tired or whatever. Work must be the same. For him, his life means just work.

-Luis Cuevas

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MY JOB

My company is Gianni. I have worked there for two years. I am a Sample Maker. I work in a design room. We have nine people who work there. One is a Designer, two are Pattern Makers, two are Cutters, and four are Sample Makers.

I am so happy to work at Gianni because me boss is nice and my co-workers are nice too. I get good pay and sometimes I get bonuses. I like to work over there because after work I can go to school every night.

But sometimes I don't like my company. When it is very busy, the work drives me crazy. I don't even have any time for myself at lunch time.

by Karen Ng

A THANKFUL BOSS

Peter: Hi. Tom. How are you today?

Tom: I am very fine, thank you Peter.

Peter: It's a beautiful morning, isn't it?

Tom: Yes, it's a beautiful day. Peter, I have a very urgent docket that must be finished today. I need you to help me out today and you're going to have to work some overtime.

Peter: I have to remind you, I have to go to school.

Tom: Usually you go at 5:00 to reach school in time. But today you go at 5:30. I appreciate it very much.

Peter: Okay, you're a reasonable boss so I don't mind. I'll do it this once.

AT THE END OF THE DAY...

Tom: Don't be late, go to school.

Peter: I am already late for school.

Tom: I am very sorry I made you stay late. But I will make it up to you.

Peter: Have a good night. I will see you in the morning.

Tom: Good-bye.

Eddy Vargas and Cecil McBean

My name is Deonauth. I am working with a shower curtain manufacturing company. My job with the company is a shipping clerk. I like working with this company but not as a shipping clerk. So I got interested in becoming a sewing machine mechanic. Because my company has sewing machines which they use to sew shower curtains, I figure if I know how to fix machines, my boss may give me a position as a mechanic with the firm. This I figure will pay a little more than what I am earning at present, and that is the reason why I am here to learn to become a machine mechanic.

Roopnauth Deonauth

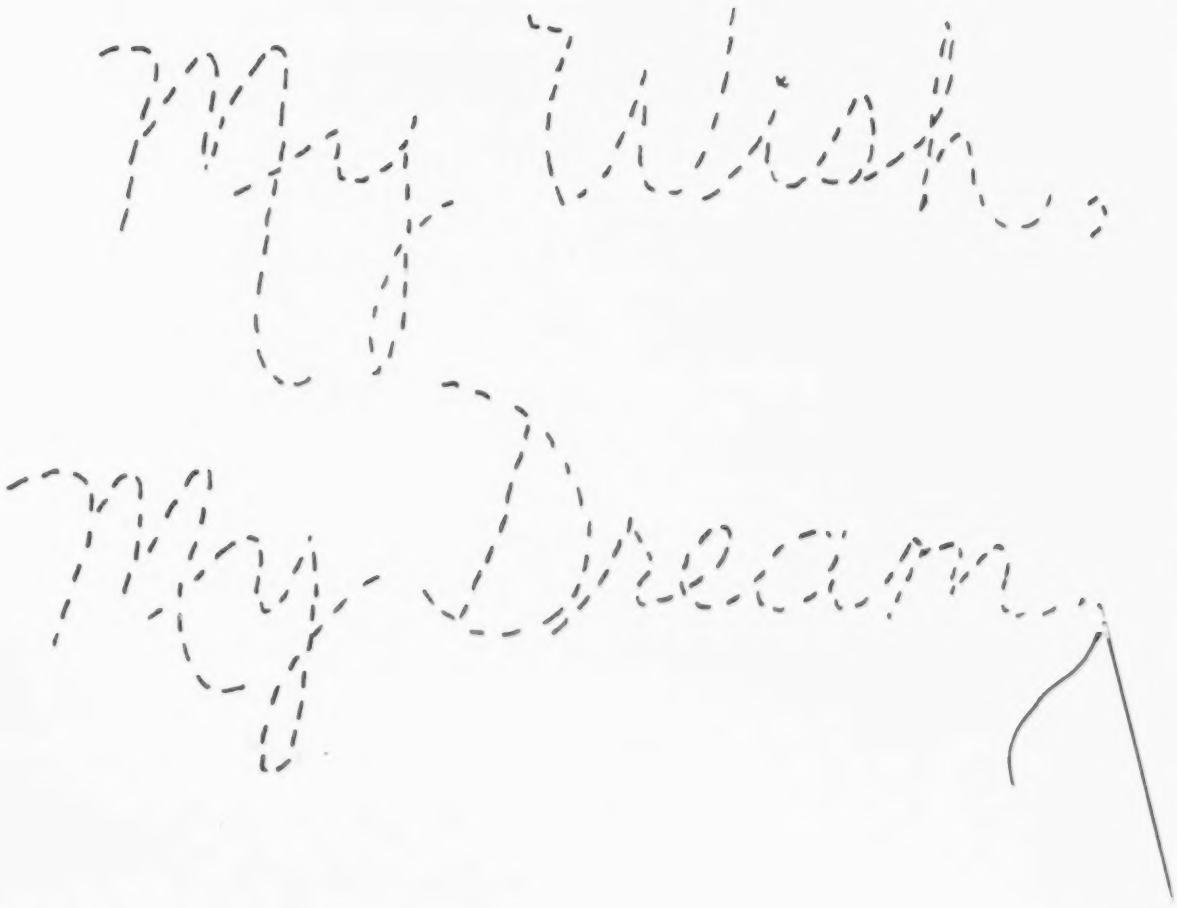
I want to explain how it is to be a sewing machine operator. I sit 7 hours sewing. I talk whenever I want to. When I need work I call for it and I get it. I enjoy my job because I love to sew. That is the good thing.

But the bad thing is that they do not pay a good salary. I work very hard to raise my children. I do not know any other job. The Union gives me this opportunity to come to this class to learn how to make patterns. Maybe in the future I'll make more money.

In this class, I learned how to trace a sloper, how to use the ruler and French curl. When I traced the sloper on pattern paper, I learned how to make the dart, the slash, the seam allowance. I also learned how to make a sloper from a two piece sloper: skewed and flush. I am very happy because I am learning.

In English I am also learning very much especially how to write. And new words everyday!

Francisca Martinez


My Book
My Dream

MY DREAM

Fashion Design to me is very important. I think it interesting and a beautiful career for anyone, especially for women. In my family I have two sisters and one aunt who are dressmakers.

Many years ago, I had my first experience as a dressmaker and designer. I made a beautiful dress for my little rabbit doll.

Now God has given me the chance to learn something related to fashion, and I feel so happy about it. My innocent child dream has come true. I am involved in the world of fashion.

With love,

Rosaura

I have made several blouses not for me but for my wife.

I took 40 sewing classes and during that time I made four blouses and one pair of shorts.

As auditor for the Quality Control Department in the place where I worked, I personally think I did a great job. I had the second place in the contest and I was given prize.

Those blouses were a great experience for me I like to sew and I need to improve more my skills in that subject.

It would be very interesting if we could continue patternmaking classes and sewing to see in practice what we do on paper.

by Alberto Lopez

Skirts We Made

My name is Iris Diaz. I am not working now. I go to school two days a week.

I am taking patternmaking. I like sewing. Three years ago I made my daughter her dress for her first communion. She looked nice.

In my country I went to school to become a secretary. I never touched a sewing machine, only a typewriter. My life is different in the United States. I have 3 children so I have a lot of work at home.

I need more experience to work in patternmaking.

Iris Diaz

I would like to finish this school because I want to get a job in patternmaking. I am good at making things with my hands.

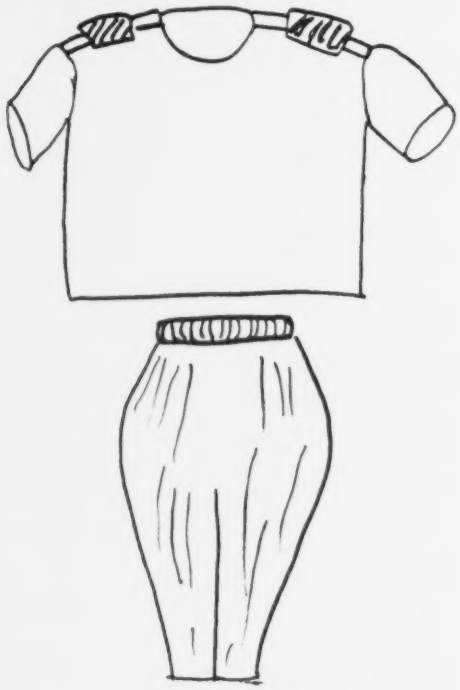
Now I am studying to be a Pattern Maker at night from 5:15 to 8:15.

In the morning, I'm studying clerical bookkeeping and English as a Second Language. But I love patternmaking. That is why I take the course.

I also studied computer programming and beauty school too. But I love patternmaking. I would like to get a job in Patternmaking and work to be a Pattern Maker.

Elizabeth Zumarraga

I would like to sew a pair of pajamas. I want my pajamas to be white and wide with a hole in each shoulder and an elastic waist. I would like the pants to be very wide and closed at the ankle. The blouse would be short sleeved. I would like to make it with fine cloth.



Aracely Caballero

I would like to sew a large skirt for a woman.

I would like to sew a dress. This is the drawing deliniation.

Haydee

I would like to sew a skirt.

Andrea

Sewing and Me

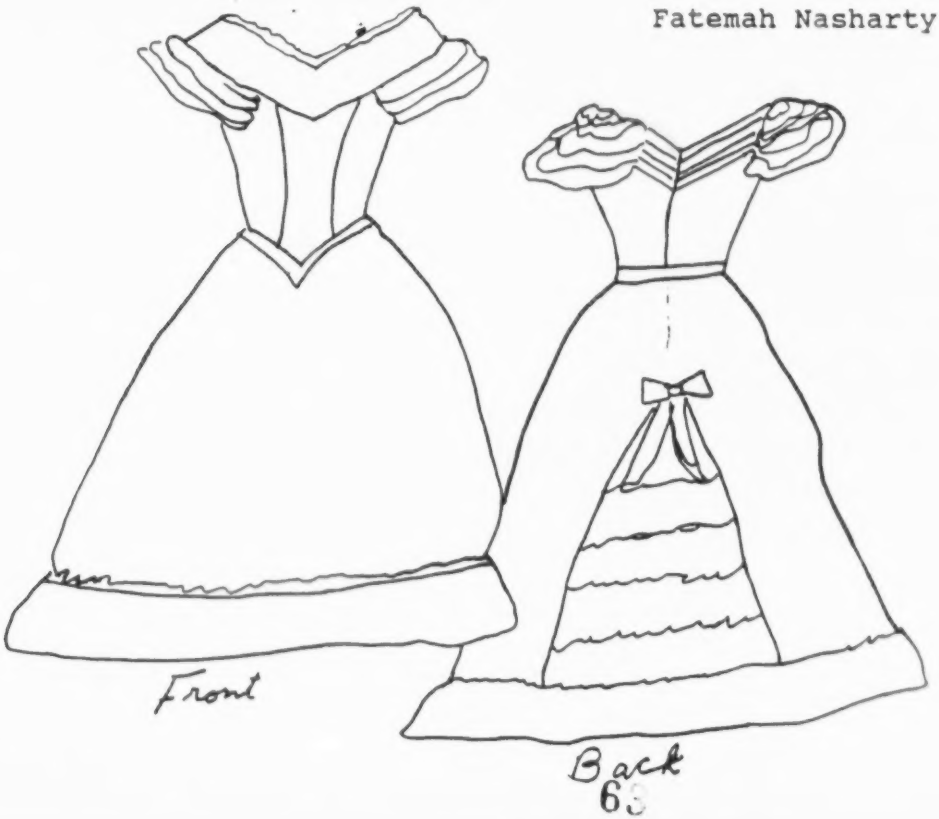
It was a dream for me to learn how to sew. I joined this school to learn the right way to sew. So far, I have learned how to lay out the pattern, pin it and cut. The safety rules and test added a lot of new information to my knowledge.

When I go back with my memory to when I was about eight years old, I remembered that I had to ask my tailor for the leftover pieces of fabric to make dresses for my dolls. That time I sewed the dresses by hand. Later, after I finished my education, I started to think about learning how to sew. I asked my mother if I could join an evening school for a few courses, but she refused because I had to travel to another city in the evening after my work day.

When I came to the United States. I started to work in the fashion industry, but my boss refused to help me learn to sew. One day my twin daughters came to my job and saw the dresses we were making. They asked, "Why don't you make dresses like these for us?" That day, I got the idea again to go to school to learn sewing.

The dresses I wish to make for them are for their sweet sixteen. I hope by the time they reach that age (they are six years old now), I'll be able to do it for them to make them happy. Cinderella's dresses (from the movie) are the ones my twins want.

Fatemah Nasharty

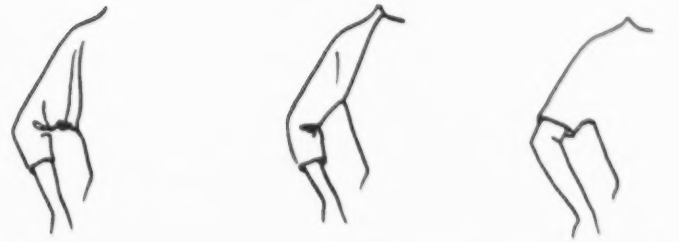


63

My name is Wong Yuen Hung. My job is Sample Making. I like my job very much. Now I am learning Draping which can help my work. I hope to learn Pattern Making after I finish Draping. I want to get a better job. That is my wish.

My sewing teacher taught me to sew. When I was twenty-one, I made a black and white, plaid, linen shirt with two pockets. It looked beautiful.

SLEEVES



Dolman Raglan Kimono

I am a garment worker since 1975. I started my garment worker job sewing only one dress a day. After three months I sewed more than that. I still work there.

Sometimes I sew pants, skirts and dresses. Now I sew pockets. I sew 100 or 200 pockets a day. I sew very nice but we get very low wages for each piece.

In 1982, the Garment Workers Union had a big problem with the boss. Then labor slowed down the boss gave us a big pay cut. We get 18 to 25 dollars daily, this is too difficult to make money. I want us to make more money.

by Wai King Ng

FAMILY FUTURE

Daughter: Dad, where are you going?

Dad: My daughter, I have to go to school to learn something for your future.

Daughter: How come you said my future? Because you go to school to learn something for yourself. That's your future. It's not my future.

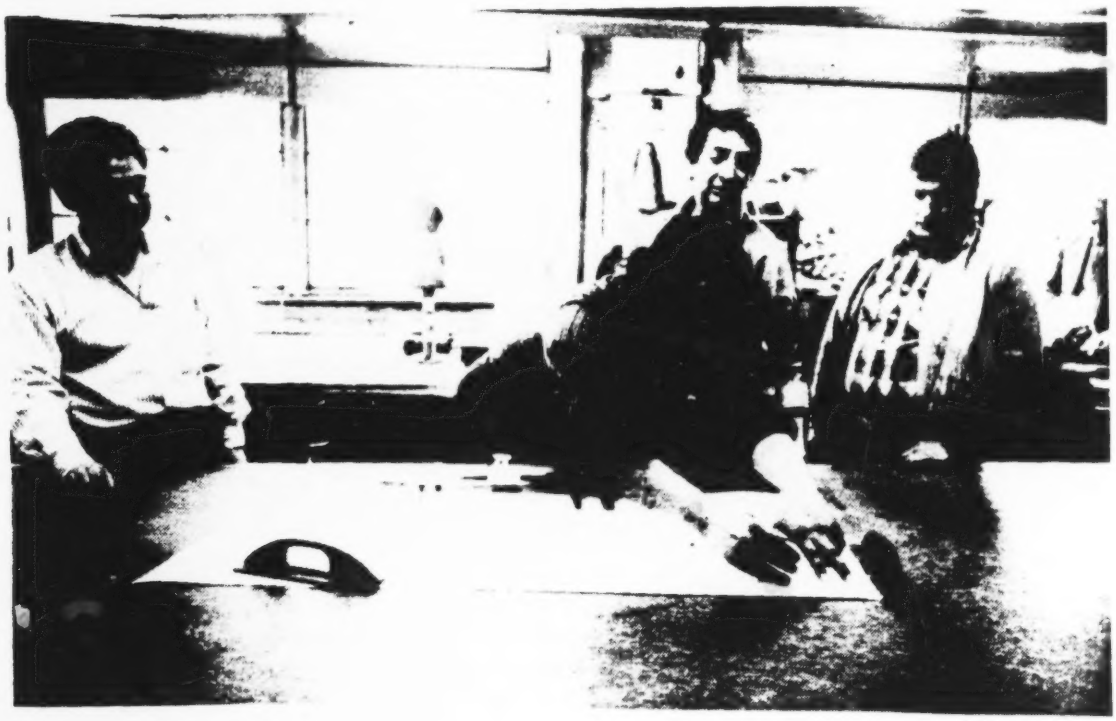
Dad: How can you say that when you know everything is true about my promise to help you when I graduate. With a better education we can live in a better neighborhood. When I get a better job I can get more money to buy you things you want, like nice dresses.

Daughter: And a nice car.

Dad: But I have to wait to see how you will do in school.

Daughter: Dad, okay. I understand now. I am sorry Father and thank you for your worries about my future.

Wendy Leung and Luis Cuevas



One year ago I came to N.Y.C. from Hong Kong. When I came to America, I felt I just knew a little English. I felt I must study more. I had to make an important decision. I decided to enroll in ILGWU Local 23-25 Evening English School until now.

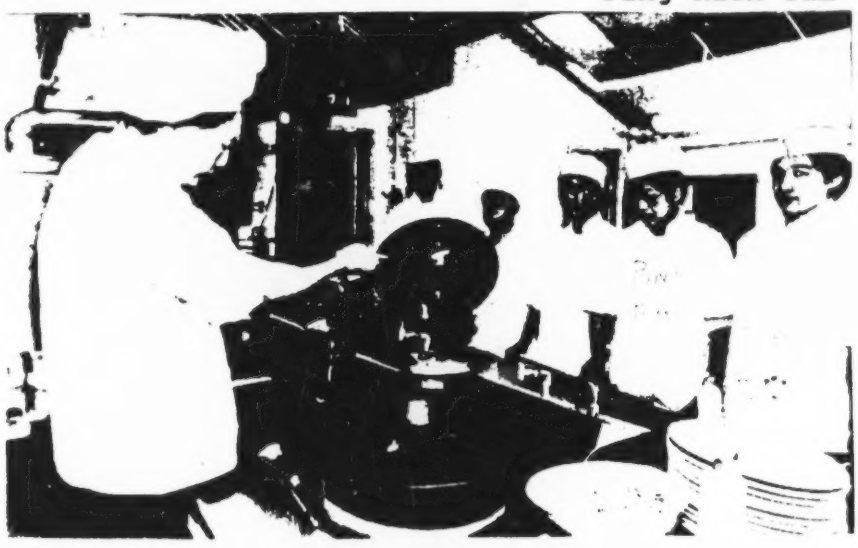
Last year in September I had an opportunity. I enrolled in the China Institute's Chef Training Program. The program was 5 days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. to learn Chinese cooking and English. The course was free and I got $80 a week to go. In this program, we learned for 13 weeks in the kitchen and classroom and we trained for 7 weeks in a restaurant's kitchen. In this program, I can learn to make more than 60 Chinese dishes. There are Chop Suey, Cantonese, Szechuan, Peking and Hunan dishes.

In the restaurant, I was a cook's helper. I just peeled and cut up vegetables and also cut up the meats. Sometimes the Chief cook or boss asked me to learn the cooking. If everyone worked hard and well, he would become a cook We completed the program at the end of January 1989. I liked the program. It let me know how to cook Chinese foods and learn English.

When I finished the Chef's training program, another opportunity came. Our Evening School Education Director, May Chen, said to us, "You can learn the Fashion Industry's Technical skills." I thought that if I worked in a restaurant everyday, I would have to work more than 11 hours and I couldn't go to evening school. Because I wanted to learn English, I decided to study patternmaking. So in February 1989, I started to learn patternmaking and English.

Last month I got a new job in an American sewing factory. My position is a sample cutter. I work 5 days a week, 9 to 5. I like the new job because I can continue to go to evening English school and the Fashion patternmaking course. Thanks to 23-25 and ILGWU, I am pretty sure I will make use of what I have learned in the upcoming future. All of our teachers are good and experienced teachers.

Ping Kuen Tam



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